

IN SEARCH OF EXCELLENCE

INTRODUCTION

- A. A Brief Overview of Israel's Military History.
 - 1. Joshua – Secured Canaan for the Israelites.
 - a. Israeli land: the east bank of the Jordan and the high country of the west bank; Dan to Beersheba.
 - b. Foreign land: Mediterranean coast and Jezreel Valley.
 - 2. Judges – Protected but did not expand the borders.
 - 3. Saul – Protects borders rather than expanding them.
 - a. Same borders as 400 years earlier.
 - b. If anything, ground had been lost – Jordan valley.
- B. A Look at David's Conquests in 2 Samuel.
 - 1. Securing a capital city – Jerusalem, 2 Sam. 5:6-10.
 - 2. 2 Sam. 8 – a listing of David's successes.
 - a. 8:1 – Subduing Philistia (expanding the western border).
 - b. 8:2 – Southern/eastern borders – Amalekites, Edomites and Moabites.
 - c. 8:3-10 – Northern border – Zobah, Arameans, Hamath.
- C. David Enjoyed Success in all His Efforts.
 - 1. There were many great men in Israel's past: Noah a man of action; Abraham, a man of faith; Joshua, a great soldier.
 - a. There were several good and noble judges.
 - b. But, when it comes to "success" in expanding the kingdom of God, nobody can measure up to David.
 - 2. The Bible describes David as "successful".
 - a. 1 Sam. 18:5, 12-16, 30 – prospered, highly esteemed.
 - b. The meaning of this word:
 - i. Hebrew sakal [saw-kal] – to be prudent or wise.
 - ii. Translations: NIV & RSV – successful; NAS – prospering; KJB – behaved himself wisely.
 - 3. However translated, David excelled in wisdom and success.
- D. Parallels between David and the Church Today.
 - 1. In both cases, the kingdom had been established in some past time: Canaan – 400 years before; Church – 2000 years before.
 - 2. In both cases, a much larger kingdom had been promised than was actually realized.
 - a. Under Saul, God's physical kingdom was much smaller than that which God had promised Abraham, Gen. 13:14-15; Dt. 34:1-4.
 - b. In our own time, God's spiritual kingdom is much smaller than that which God intends.
 - 3. In both cases, the people of God were living beneath their potential and failing to enjoy their blessings.
 - 4. In both cases, the problem lay squarely in a lack of faithful, visionary, daring leadership.
- E. As we examine some characteristics of David's life, we may find something that led to success for God's kingdom in his day that will lead to similar successes today.

I. GOD WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SUCCESSES OF DAVID.

- A. First and Foremost, We Must Recognize the Work of God.
 - 1. 2 Sam. 5:10, "*And David became greater and greater, for the Lord God of hosts was with him.*"
 - 2. 2 Sam. 7:8-9.

3. Everything David did was of God. All credit belongs to God. It was by God's power that David accomplished great things.
- B. Why did God Bless David With Such Success?
 1. The same God chose both Saul and David.
 2. Why did David succeed while Saul failed?
 3. Why did Saul barely protect the borders while David expanded them four-fold?

II. DAVID WAS A MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART.

- A. Direct Passages Relating to David's Character:
 1. 1 Sam. 13:14, "*The Lord has sought out for Himself a man after His own heart,...*"
 - a. Saul had sinned – offering what only a priest could offer, 1 Sam. 13:8-10.
 - b. Samuel tells Saul that God has taken the kingdom away from him and will give it to one who is "*after His own heart*", one who will keep the Lord's commands.
 2. 1 Sam. 16:7 – He had found such a man in David.
 - a. Samuel goes to anoint one of the sons of Jesse.
 - b. He is impressed with Eliab – tall and handsome.
 - c. But God is interested in the heart. He intends David to be king because he has the right heart.
- B. Qualities Which Endearred David to God:
 1. **Integrity** – for the most part, David lived by his beliefs. There is honesty, honor, and heroism shown in David's life.
 2. **Tender Conscience** – David, Bathsheba, Nathan (2 Sam. 12).
 3. **Close Relationship with God.**
 - a. David loved to worship God, sing His praises, pray to Him, and generally spend time in His presence.
 - b. David loved God. He loved God's word. He loved God's house. He loved God's laws.
- C. We Need Leaders after God's Heart Today.
 1. Leaders who exhibit the kind of heart David had.
 2. Leaders of compassion, integrity, and spirituality.
- D. But there is something more needed to do great things in God's kingdom.
 1. Boaz was a good man, but he was no David.
 2. Samuel was a great man of God, but he was not the leader David was.
 3. Even Job, for all his righteousness, known more for his ability to hang on than to accomplish great things.

III. DAVID AND THE CAPACITY FOR RISK.

- A. David was a Risk-taker By Nature.
 1. When Saul asks David to kill 100 Philistines as the bride price of marrying his daughter Michal, David kills 200 for good measure, 1 Sam. 18:25-27.
 2. Sneaking in to Saul's camp with Abishai, 1 Sam. 26:6ff.
 - a. Saul was sleeping in the middle of his men.
 - b. David sneaks into the camp late at night and steals Saul's spear and water jug.
 - c. Partly, to prove he had no evil intentions towards Saul. It is also implied, that David loved to take risks.
 3. You don't survive very long as a shepherd fighting lions, or a gorilla-fighter, or the leader of an embattled nation unless you are willing to take a risk.
- B. David Was Also a Risk-taker By Faith.
 1. David and Goliath, 1 Sam. 17.
 - a. Goliath was huge and insulting.
 - b. The Israelites were afraid.

- c. David was willing to take the risk, 1 Sam. 17:45-47.
- 2. David and Saul, 1 Sam. 24 & 26.
 - a. Saul tried repeatedly to kill David, 1 Sam. 18:10-11, 17; 19:1ff.
 - b. David refused to kill Saul even when he had opportunity, 1 Sam. 26:9-11.
- 3. David and his battles:
 - a. On a number of occasions, God tells David to go to battle with forces far superior to his own.
 - i. 1 Sam. 23, 2 Sam. 5 – Philistines.
 - ii. 1 Sam. 30 – Amalekites.
 - b. David does so each time because he knows it is the Lord's will.
- C. It was David's willingness to Risk that Made Him Successful.
 - 1. In each instance, David could have played it safe.
 - a. Goliath, Saul, Philistines.
 - b. But the way of safety is not the way of success.
 - 2. When David saw the will of God, he willingly went out on a limb to do what God wanted him to do.
 - 3. Because of this, the kingdom grew.

CLOSING

- A. "Risking It" in the Church Today.
 - 1. Reviewing the parallels:
 - a. The challenge to expand the kingdom is before us.
 - b. Like Israel under Saul, we are living beneath our potential and below God's promises.
 - c. Any failure to grow is not due to:
 - i. a lack in God's power.
 - ii. a misunderstanding of God's wishes.
 - iii. a host of opportunities.
 - d. Failure is due instead to a lack of risk-taking on the part of God's people.
 - e. You don't accomplish great things without stepping out on a limb once in a while.
 - 2. Risk-taking By Faith.
 - a. Faith asks us to go beyond what is comfortable!
 - i. Confronting the Goliaths of our own day.
 - ii. Fighting the superior forces that face us.
 - b. Only this kind of faith will allow the kingdom to grow.
- B. Are there any "Davids" in the church today?
 - 1. God's church needs men and women who are close to His heart – people of integrity, conscience and devotion.
 - 2. God's church also needs some riskers – those who add to their good heart the willingness to risk life or position or dignity so as to be obedient to God.